

**Illinois Department of Transportation  
Work Zone Safety Committee Meeting  
10:00 a.m. – Executive Conference Room  
April 27, 2005**

Attendees:	Priscilla Tobias	Roseanne Nance
	Dennis Lyle	John Benda
	Kurt Schuldt	Dennis Huckaba
	Jim Schoenherr	Gary Galecki
	Heide Liske	Greg Piland
	Matt Mueller	Michael Ripka
	Kyle Carson	Tom Whalen
	Jeff Darko	Melissa Schaive
	Mike Brand	Jerry Cearlock
	Joe Hill	Joyce Schroeder
	Debra Johnik	David Penn
	Jessica Baker	Michelle Shutt

The meeting convened at 10:00 a.m. Introductions of all present.

**Opening Remarks:**

Priscilla Tobias welcomed everyone to the meeting. Two handouts were presented; Fact Sheet for Work Zone Enforcement drafted by the Bureau of Safety Engineering and a Dear Abby article "Remember Roadworkers when Driving". The Comprehensive Safety Plan (CHSP) Work Zone Notebook was also distributed. A draft copy of the CHSP Work Zone emphasis area is included in the notebook. Comments were requested on this portion by May 6.

**Review and Approval of January 27, 2005 Minutes:**

Joyce Schroeder wanted a clarification regarding the crash in District 7. She indicated this crash is still deemed a work zone crash and that placement was irrelevant. The only way it would have been taken out of the work zone listing is if it would turn out to not be a crash; if it were natural causes.

The minutes of the January 27, 2005 meeting were approved.

**Status of the Comprehensive Safety Plan:**

The CHSP is scheduled to be presented to Secretary Martin on May 27 and to the Governor on June 1. IDOT is in the process of incorporating all comments received at the March 7 and March 25 Safety Summit. There is one change – Pedestrians, as an emphasis area, is now called Vulnerable Roadway Users and includes pedalcyclists and motorcycles. There will be an Implementation Team for each emphasis area. Each team will look at strategies and work together, thru sub-committees, on each emphasis area. Each emphasis area will need to look at the four E's (Education, Enforcement, Engineering and Emergency Medical Services).

Priscilla has had discussions with ATSSA regarding a calendar and a campaign with the grade schools and high schools to do an art competition which would enable us to reach into the schools to convey work zone safety. We need to find sponsors to help defray costs.

The Work Zone Awareness Week put on by the Office of External Affairs and the Bureau of Safety Engineering received glowing reviews by the media. The photo enforcement display was a huge hit. Jessica Baker mentioned that Outreach Coordinators in the Office of External Affairs have been doing school bus safety presentations with a robotic figure called "Buster" where work zone safety is touched upon. Good success with this program in District 7.

The Governor's and Secretary's goal is to reduce vehicle-related fatalities to 1,000 or less by 2008. So far in 2005, we are 55 below where we were at in 2004.

#### **Work Zone Fatalities for 2005:**

Joyce Schroeder distributed a handout entitled "**Fatalities in Illinois Work Zones – 1999 – 2005.**" Roughly 12-1/2% of the year's work zone fatalities occur during January 1 through April 30. The data presented is through April 25, 2005. However, there could be additional data added which has not yet been reported. Based on the averages for the past 9 years, the numbers could go as high as 47 or 48 fatalities for the year, considering that we have already had six fatalities. Last year we also had six fatalities for the first four months and ended up with 39 for the year. The year prior to that, however, was extraordinarily high for crashes, not only in Illinois, but in the nation. Illinois had 44 work zone fatalities in 2003.

Semis and motorcycles are somewhat over represented in the work zone numbers. The 2004 numbers as presented in January were updated to add one, taking the number to 39. This is probably a final number but we are still missing several police reports. As stated before, we have had six work zone fatalities in 2005, three on interstates and three on Illinois routes. One of the interstate crashes involved a semi and one of the Illinois route crashes involved a motorcycle. There is no travel data for work zones, however, it is believed that speed, maneuverability, and uneven pavement are contributing factors in crashes. While semis are sometimes involved in work zone crashes, they are sometimes not the cause. Cars cutting in front of them and their inability to stop quickly contribute. As more data is gathered, a clearer understanding will be known. The last page of the handout has data by location. Three of the work zone crashes were on the Dan Ryan Expressway. It is extremely difficult to determine the exact cause. Speed and alcohol are contributing factors. However, alcohol is rarely listed in a police report. These results are determined much later by lab reports. Police reports sometimes do not show the information that is actually required to determine cause. Traffic Safety will pull death certificates from the Department of Public Health to aid in putting the pieces together. Jeff Darko, Illinois State Police (ISP) indicated that the crash reconstruction report should be used to determine what happened in a crash.

Dennis Huckaba, Bureau of Safety Engineering, will go to the site when there is a work zone fatal crash to survey the situation to determine if there is something that might

possibly need to be changed with the department's current Standards and Specifications.

Secretary Martin has set the goal of zero worker fatalities for this year, and thus far we have not had any. A recommendation was made to Director Modeer making it mandatory that the construction staff take the 10-hour OSHA course. Most of the districts have taken the course or in the process. Hopefully, this will bring awareness to the construction staff as far as their work environment. Starting this year, construction worker fatalities in work zones will count in the numbers, even if equipment related.

#### **Photo Enforcement RFP:**

The Photo Enforcement Request for Proposals has been published. The mandatory pre-bid meeting is set for May 4, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor Annex Conference Room. The bid opening is set for 1:00 p.m. on May 18, 2005.

Photo enforcement will begin in July 2005. IDOT is working with the ISP regarding training which will take several weeks. Of the two photo enforcement vans we are receiving, one will be placed on the Dan Ryan initially and may move to other Chicago locations and the other will be deployed to problem areas throughout the State. Signs "Photo Radar in Use – Automated Traffic Control System" will be posted on projects on the Interstate system throughout the State, whether or not the van is present. Our intent with the signs is to receive voluntary compliance and get motorists to slow down. However, if a motorist speeds through a work zone, he/she will receive a ticket. Legislation is in place for these tickets to be issued through the mail to motorists speeding through the work zones. The camera will snap an image of the driver and license plate and will indicate the speed you are traveling. The ticket will be issued to the registered owner. However, there will be a place on the ticket to indicate who was driving the vehicle, if other than the owner. This information would be returned to the vendor and the ticket will be re-issued to the identified driver.

Work zone fines are higher than other speeding tickets and require a mandatory court appearance. The first offense is a \$375 fine with \$125 going to the hire back program; the second offense is a \$1,000 fine with \$250 going to the hire back, and the loss of your license for 90 days if this is the second offense in two years. The fines are the same regardless of whether you are issued a ticket via the photo enforcement or by a State Trooper. The only difference with photo enforcement is that it may only be used when workers are present.

The public needs to be educated more effectively. They need to understand work zone speed limits signs may be posted not only to protect nearby workers, but also because roadway conditions, such as barriers on shoulders, short entrance ramps, lane shifts, reduce the motorist's safety.

Educating the public and news media on photo enforcement, how it works, fines, etc., will be critical to the success of this effort. Once the aforementioned are educated, we will move forward to educate the judicial system. Everyone needs to be on board for this program to be effective. There is a requirement by legislation that we have additional motorist information put out before photo enforcement can go into effect.

A question was asked if the "Rules of the Road" booklet for drivers was updated to better address work zone safety. A recommendation was made at the Governor's Work Zone Task Force meeting to update the "Rules of the Road". With the Secretary of State on board, through the CHSP, we need to look at changing the "Rules of the Road." If this is accomplished, it would carry over into the curriculum in the high schools.

The vendor will be responsible for creating a check sheet for the Resident Engineers so they can go through with the contractor and make sure that the work zone traffic control is set up correctly before the photo enforcement is deployed. This is to ensure proper evidence is available and cases are not thrown out of court. The Department is meeting with the University of Illinois regarding the research project to measure the success of the photo radar proposal.

### **"In the Zone" Video**

Construction Safety Council in Hillside, Illinois will cover the \$1,000 copyright fee. Three other groups, Illinois Broadcasters, Great Plains Laborer's Union, and Illinois Roadbuilders/ATSSA, will also contribute. These fees will help cover the expenses for copyright, reproduction, and mailing. A decision needs to be made as to how many CD's and videos we want. Channel 1 is in many of the schools and they will require VHS tapes. It would be a good idea to put the photo enforcement on the video before it is produced. ATSSA logo will be put on the video and this organization is also willing to distribute it. IDOT will need to sign a licensing agreement. The question was asked if the intended recipients of this video could be solicited to see what type of media format they would require. Roseanne Nance indicated this was being done.

### **J-4 Flagger**

On January 28, 2005 the Federal Highway Administration issued a notice for interim approval for the use of the J-4 flagging device. In the notice they outlined our responsibilities for continuing with this device which included that we had to request permission again this year to use it. On March 29, 2005 Joe Hill sent out a memo. Changes will need to be made on all twenty flaggers. We will have to change the color on the flashing light, adding red and adding amber to the slow side, and make a plastic cover to meet requirements. There is a "wait on stop" text required for the stop side. This is not a bad idea. If you have a stop sign by itself, the state law requirement is you pull up, you stop, you look both ways, you continue. The issue that has come up is where to place the text on the flagger. We have checked with Rick, the manufacturer, and he is looking into it. At this point we are waiting for a response from the FHWA. We are meeting with Rick to fine tune the flagger device and make sure it is ready for the construction season. The next step will be to take care of the revisions. Rick will take care of the light, but IDOT needs to be responsible for the signing. Once the flagger is in use, an evaluation will need to be scheduled.

Another issue with the flagging device will be training. One thing we know from last year's evaluation is there is a break down in communication between our training and the person using the device. We need to make sure that the flaggers know they are still

flagging. This is something where they need to be in control. Information was sent out with the machines last year, but it did not get to the operators.

Debra Johnnigk said she is working on a training video. Flaggers have to be re-certified every three years with a four-hour refresher course. The video will be part of this course. Jeff Darko indicated there are a couple of guys from the Illinois State Police that would like to sit in on this training to see what is being taught so when they are in the work zone they know what is expected of the flaggers. He also indicated a program will be implemented in one of the Illinois State Police Districts where radar will be put on the J-4 flagger and a pager given to a worker in the work zone. If someone is entering the work zone at a high rate of speed, the pager would be activated.

The J-4 flaggers are not to be sent back out for use until the lighting and signing changes have been made. Districts need to be aware of this. The Bureau of Operations will send out the memo or e-mail with this information.

#### **Standards and Specifications - Recent Changes:**

A year ago drastic changes were made to the Highway Standards. Effective January 1, 2005 there was a new highway standard for two-lane closures. We had not previously had a standard drawing for a two-lane closure. Just about every Department standard drawing was modified effective January 2005; some only had very minor modifications.

On April 1, 2003, flaggers were required to wear ANSI Class II vests. As of April 1, 2005, ANSI Class III will be required. This year IDOT staff will be required to wear ANSI Class II vests during the day, even if they are behind barrier but within 25' of the pavement. This is a protective equipment provision that coincides with the Employee Safety Code.

Effective January 1, 2005 there is a minimum lane width requirement with a lane closure. If you are closing one lane, the adjacent lane must have a minimum width of 10'. On a two-lane interstate this is not critical because there is shoulder where you can edge off, but when you get a three-lane interstate and the barriers are put out there and you move them over two or three feet, you are effectively closing two lanes, and it doesn't work.

The Traffic Control Efficiency Reduction was revised January 1, 2005. Resident Engineers are supposed to drive to their jobs at the beginning and end of each day to make sure their work zones are clearly and correctly signed and delineated and document this information.

Everyone was asked if they had seen the signs "Hit a Worker \$10,000 fine and 14 years in Jail". When these first came out, they were used specifically for interstate projects and the provision for other highly conflicted roadway areas in Chicago. Designers can now put in the check sheet and this sign can go in on any project if they feel it is necessary.

August 1, 2005 is the scheduled date to include specific requirements for night time lighting for flagger stations. We are continuing to look at the overall lighting specifications for night time work. There is a project in District 2 where night time

lighting specifications are part of the contract. Hal Wakefield, FHWA, is really pushing consideration of night time lighting specifications on projects done at night.

In the past, there have been public service announcements run at the Cubs and Cardinals baseball games. Chicago area LECET and Illinois LECET sponsored some of the public service announcements. This worked well last year and the department is interested in their sponsorship again.

The meeting adjourned at noon. An e-mail will be sent regarding a date for the next meeting, probably in July.